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SUBJECT: SOMALIA CONSULTATIONS, MARCH 20, 2009

(U) 1. This is an action request. USUN may draw upon the elements below during the UN Security Council open debate on Somalia, scheduled for March 20, 2009.

Begin elements.

-The United States thanks Special Representative of the Secretary General Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah for his briefing today.

- The United States congratulates the Transitional Federal Parliament on its recent expansion and January 30 election of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as President of the Transitional Federal Government, and the appointment of Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke as his new Prime Minister. We congratulate both President Sharif and Prime Minister Sharmarke for selecting a cabinet which represents a wide selection of interests, clans, and sub-clans, and urge all parties to work together in the consolidation of peace in Somalia.

- We look forward to working with the new Transitional Federal Government and remain encouraged by the political progress made under the Djibouti Agreement. The United States strongly supports President Sharif's efforts to encourage parties outside the Djibouti Process to join him in rebuilding Somalia.

-In this spirit, the United States urges all groups that have not yet done so, to put down their weapons and join the peace and reconciliation process. We strongly denounce the terrorist organization al-Shabab for not joining this process, and for its statements that it will not only target the new government, but also continue its campaign against the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and humanitarian NGOs. As decided by the Council in resolution 1844, the Somalia Sanctions Committee can designate for targeted sanctions those threatening the peace, security or stability of Somalia, the Transitional Federal Institutions or AMISOM; those violating the arms embargo; or those obstructing the delivery or distribution of humanitarian assistance in Somalia.

-Correspondingly, we condemn Eritrea's continued provision of financial, logistical, and political support to al-Shabab and other extremists, and the February 23 press release of the Eritrea Foreign Ministry that, in effect, rejects the new Somali Unity Government. The United States stresses that these actions only serve to prolong the conflict in Somalia and can no longer be tolerated.

- The United States highly commends the work and the bravery of the Burundian and Ugandan troops in AMISOM, who continue to operate under difficult conditions, and we urge AU Member States which have pledged troops to AMISOM to make arrangements for their deployment. We also strongly support the Secretary-General's call for donors to help AMISOM meet its needs through bilateral contributions. The United States

underscores that with the election of Sheikh Sharif, the recent move of the unity government to Mogadishu, and the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces, the international community has been presented with a narrow opportunity to make real progress, and that we must take advantage of this opening with prompt and decisive action.

- On the issue of piracy, the United States is most encouraged by the international community's response to the scourge of piracy off the Somali coast; in the area dedicated to counter-piracy activities, on any given day there are naval patrol vessels representing 15-20 different nations. States as diverse as Japan, China, Russia, the UK, France, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Denmark, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the Republic of Korea, Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany and Singapore and NATO and the EU, have committed or will commit shortly naval assets to the area. We encourage those states that have committed assets to put them in place rapidly.

-The United States believes that the Contact Group for Piracy of the Coast of Somalia has proven to be an effective mechanism in coordinating counter-piracy activity in the area, and we are pleased with the two meetings thus far. We look forward to the next Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia meeting in June.

-We commend the Government of Kenya for offering to prosecute

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so many of the pirates captured by the international community, and we urge all states, particularly those directly affected by piracy, to assist the Government of Kenya with the logistical and financial challenges associated with trying these pirates. Likewise, we call on all states, especially the victims of acts of piracy, to share the responsibility of prosecuting suspected pirates. We underline that the burden of prosecution should not fall on the shoulders of Kenya and other regional states alone.

-Finally, we recognize and thank the staff of the Department of Political Affairs, the UN Political Office for Somalia, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support, the World Food Program, AMISOM, and all other UN agencies, aid and assistance organizations, and entities operating for the betterment of Somali people and in the rebuilding of their country, for their hard work and efforts.

These people are working in difficult and often dangerous circumstances. The United States strongly condemns the series of attacks and kidnappings on all aid workers and AMISOM troops, and demands that all violence against these persons and entities be ceased.

End elements.
CLINTON